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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study was to evaluate age-developmental differences in boys' incorporation of information about chronicity of a transgressor's behavior in their judgments of the efficacy of paternal disciplinary behaviors. Additionally, the study was designed to investigate boys' evaluations of fathers' applications of different types of discipline. A total of 157 Caucasian boys ranging from 5 to 16 years of age participated. The expectation was confirmed that 8- to 9-year-olds and 11- to 12-year-olds, but not 5- to 6-year-olds, would judge paternal disciplinary behaviors to be efficacious in preventing future transgression. However, the expectation that boys 11 to 12 years of age and older would incorporate "chronicity" information in their efficacy judgments was not confirmed. Additionally, contrary to predictions, 15- to 16-year-olds did not judge paternal disciplinary behaviors to be efficacious at all. Evaluations of the disciplinary fathers were, relatively, strongly negative at the 5- to 6-year age level and neutral to very good at all older age levels. However, only the 11- to 12-year-olds evidenced a significant relationship between their efficacy judgments of paternal discipline and their evaluations of the fathers. Findings are interpreted in terms of post-hoc evidence of boys' mediating conceptions derived from verbal interviews. (Author/MP)

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Developmental Differences in Boys' Judgments about Paternal Disciplinary Behavior

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this study was to evaluate age-developmental differences in boys' incorporation of information about chronicity of a transgressor's behavior in their judgments of the efficacy of paternal disciplinary behaviors. Additionally, this study was designed to investigate boys' evaluations of fathers applying different types of discipline. The expectation was confirmed that 8- to 9-year-olds and 11- to 12-year-olds, but not 5- to 6-year-olds, would judge paternal disciplinary behaviors to be efficacious in preventing future transgression. However, the expectation that boys 11 to 12 years of age and older would incorporate "chronicity" information in their efficacy judgements was disconfirmed. Additionally, contrary to predictions, 15- to 16-year-olds did not judge paternal disciplinary behaviors to be efficacious at all. Evaluations of the disciplinary fathers were relatively strongly negative at the five to six year age level and neutral to very good at all older age levels. However, only the 11- to 12-year-olds evidenced a significant relationship between their efficacy judgments of paternal discipline and their evaluations of the fathers. These findings are interpreted in terms of post-hoc evidence of boys' mediating conceptions derived from verbal interviews.

Developmental Differences in Boys' Judgments about Paternal Disciplinary Behavior

Children's perceptions of parental disciplinary behavior might have special theoretical significance for furthering our knowledge of the parent-child relationship. Yet, our knowledge of children's perceptions of parental disciplinary behavior remains limited as only a few published studies have directly addressed this issue (Appel, 1977; Mancuso & Allen, 1976; Siegal & Rablin, 1982). A common theoretical base for each of these efforts has been Piaget's (1932) work on moral judgment development.

Piaget conceptualized children's expressed views on punishment in terms of two general developmental stages. Pre-seven-year-old, egocentric children, operating from a preoperational, heteronomous morality of constraint expressed judgments that transgressors should be subjected to severe, "expiatory" chastisement. Post-seven-year-old children evidenced their concrete operational, autonomous moral orientation by endorsing less severe disciplinary measures based on "reciprocity." Piaget concluded from his interrogations that, "for the little ones, the idea of expiation is necessarily bound up with the idea of preventing a relapse. The older ones, on the contrary, concentrate above all and almost exclusively on the preventive utility with very definite diminution of the idea of expiation" (Piaget, 1932, p. 226).

Building from these ideas, Mancuso and Allen (1976) explored the ways in which young people predicted future transgression from a boy who had been chastised by his mother. Five- to six-year-old children predicted continued transgression from a child that had been chastised. When they had seen no

maternal response to transgression, children of this age predicted relatively fewer future transgressions. These young children, then, did not attribute a preventative quality to an administered maternal reprimand. In contrast, older children (eight- to nine-year-olds) after having viewed the transgression/reprimand scenarios used in the Mancuso and Allen study, predicted fewer transgressions from the chastised child--with the child having been subjected to "explanatory" reprimand being seen as less likely to transgress than was the child who had been exposed to "coercive" reprimands. Eleven- to 12-year-old children attributed equal efficacy to both explanatory and coercive reprimands.

Mancuso and Allen attributed these developmentally ordered differences in children's predictions of future transgressions to the tendency of older children to utilize concepts which refer to inner, personal factors as they make attributions about interpersonal events (Livesley & Bromley, 1973). This suggestion is compatible with findings reported by Leahy (1979), who reported that, in a study of children's recommendations of the proper punishment to apply following a transgression, the 11-year-old respondents, but not those six years of age, used information about the relative chronicity of a transgressor's rule violating behavior.

The present study was designed to evaluate the effects of information about chronicity of a transgressor's misbehavior on boys' judgments about the efficacy of paternal disciplinary measures imposed on the transgressor. It was assumed that evidence of chronicity (which can be seen as evidence of commitment to the unwanted behavior) would encourage respondents to make an attribution about a salient aspect of the transgressor's "inner character." Boys who

observed chronicity, it was expected, would be likely to "factor" this information into their judgments of the efficacy of different kinds of paternal disciplinary action. Having seen repeated transgression, they might conclude that the unwanted behavior represented a "highly ingrained" aspect of the transgressor's behavior, thus making the "chronic" offender's misbehavior more impervious to behavior-change efforts.

Using age as a general index of operativity level, it was hypothesized that five- to six-year-old boys would not be likely to have a functional schema for making direct, causal attributions to disciplinary behaviors, that instead, they would define a disciplined boy largely by his involvement in a transgression-discipline sequence and would correlatively categorize him as "bad." On the other hand, it was expected that boys eight years of age and older would be likely to have developed functional schemata for making direct, causal attributions to disciplinary behaviors. With more advanced development of such social cognition "rules," boys should show increased propensity toward relating concrete actions to anticipated outcomes.

The study was designed to demonstrate that while most boys eight years of age and older would judge paternal disciplinary behaviors to be efficacious in preventing future transgression, only the boys who had reached the age of 11-12 years would show that they had been influenced by prior information about a transgressor's style of behavior in similar transgression-involved situations. In short, it was expected that 11- to 12-year-old boys, using information about the transgressor's "characteristic" behavior, would form a dispositional attribution. This attribution would then be reflected in judgments about the

efficacy of subsequent paternal disciplinary behavior. Specifically, it was hypothesized that boys at and above the 11- to 12-year-old level would judge that a father's coercive tactics applied to a "chronic" transgressor would be more efficacious than would be explanatory tactics.

Additionally, this study was designed to investigate boys' evaluations of fathers who had applied different types of discipline. In a recent consideration of a related issue, Appel (1977) reported developmental differences in children's evaluations of mothers' permissiveness in situations calling for the exercise of social control. Five- to six-year-old children evaluated permissive mothers more positively than did eight- to 10-year-old children. Appel interpreted these findings to reflect the younger children's relatively inadequate grasp of the motivational bases of mothers' behaviors. In the present study, sets of boys observed a father enacting disciplinary behaviors, as he attempted to exercise social control. How would these boys' evaluations of the different fathers be affected by the kind of discipline they had observed? Following one line of the thinking presented by Piaget (1932), one would predict that five- to six-year-old boys, who operate from a heteronomous morality of unilateral constraint, would not make relatively negative evaluations of a more coercive disciplinarian. Piaget concluded that, a "punitive reaction on the part of the adult is legitimate in the eyes of the child in so far as the suffering imposed is in proportion to the fault that has been committed" (p. 228). Yet, as Appel (1977) suggests, five- to six-year-olds might fail to understand the motivation behind the fathers' reprimands. In this case, they might focus on the fathers' concrete actions; and would, thereupon, evaluate the father on the basis of his

concrete actions. The father's severity, then, would lead to his being judged as "bad."

One could make more straightforward predictions about the ways in which boys aged eight years and beyond would evaluate the disciplining father. It was expected that boys aged eight and older, being able to surmise the intentions of the fathers' disciplinary behaviors, would evaluate the fathers more positively when they viewed the fathers' choices of tactics to be more efficacious.

Method

Participants

One hundred and fifty-seven boys participated in this study, 40 boys at each of three younger age levels and 37 boys at the oldest age level. The mean ages of each of the age groups were 5.8, 8.9, 11.8, and 15.3 years, respectively. Participants attended the schools of small communities fringing urban centers in the Capital District Region of New York State.

The sample was composed of Caucasion boys from parentally intact homes who had returned parental consent to the investigators. Background data obtained from the subjects and their school records pertaining to fathers' occupational status indicated that the sample consisted primarily of lower-middle-class boys.

Stimulus Materials

The stimulus material consisted of four different videotaped social interaction sequences, each being approximately eight minutes in length. The tapes were produced by the staff of the Education Communications Center of

the State University of New York at Albany, and the same actors were employed in all scenarios. All film segments except those containing the manipulated variations were, in fact, the same enactment.

All four film sequences began with the same introduction: the main character, a 12-year-old boy named Roger, attempting to persuade two peers to shorten the duration of their table hockey game so that he could take his turn playing the winner. This introduction was followed by one of two differing segments intended to illustrate variations in the independent variable of chronicity--the boy's "characteristic" style of attempting to resolve interpersonal disagreement. In the "uses physical aggression" segment, Roger was shown making a physical attack on one of the boys who would not comply with his insistence that the game be shortened. In the "uses verbal argument" segment Roger was shown engaged in continued verbal effort to make his case and achieve conciliation.

Following this pre-transgression segment, the actual transgression scene was shown. A friend of Roger's accidentally breaks Roger's model ship. Roger then pushes his friend after vehemently objecting to his friend's unwillingness to comply with Roger's specifications of appropriate restitution. Respondents then saw either one of two discipline segments in which Roger's father separated the boys and administered a reprimand to Roger. In the explanatory reprimand scene Roger's father expressed his negative evaluation of Roger's behavior, explained its socially negative implications and suggested alternative behaviors. In the coercive reprimand segment, Roger's father expressed his negative evaluation of Roger's behavior, informed Roger that he would be "grounded" for

two weeks as a punishment, and then threatened that continued transgression would result in even more negative consequences.

Thus, in the four conditions the films depicted the following sequences: (1) Physical aggression in a pre-transgression situation---> transgression---> explanatory reprimand, (2) Physical aggression in a pre-transgression situation---> transgression---> coercive reprimand; (3) verbal argument in a pre-transgression situation---> transgression---> explanatory reprimand; (4) verbal argument in a pre-transgression situation---> transgression---> coercive reprimand.

Dependent Measures

Two dependent measures provided participants with concrete media for making judgments about the effects of the paternal disciplinary behavior which they had viewed on the films. On each of these measures participants were given specific instructions for coordinating prospective socialization outcomes with the preceding paternal disciplinary action. Additionally a third measure was employed to enable participants to make a global evaluation of the disciplinary father.

The Global Prospective Evaluation Scale (GPES). This instrument enabled participants to make a global prospective evaluation of Roger as a function of his being disciplined. Participants were presented with a response sheet consisting of a horizontal row of seven boys' faces ranging from a broad smile to a severe frown and seven verbal labels ranging from "very, very bad" to "very, very good" printed beneath each face. Subjects were asked to choose the face representing the kind of boy Roger would be in the future, given the way he was disciplined by his father. Subjects marked an X over the face of their

choice on the response sheets. Choices were later converted to numerical ratings so that the ratings of 1, 2, and 3 represented decreasing degrees of bad, ratings of 5, 6, and 7 represented increasing degrees of good and a rating of 4 represented a neutral not-good-not-bad evaluation.

The Social Problem Solving Behavior Prediction Test (SPSBPT). This instrument enabled subjects to make predictions about the styles of social problem solving behaviors that Roger would employ in future situations, as a function of his being disciplined by his father. The instrument consisted of two response sheets, each of which pictured five hypothetical social problem situations depicting forceful, physically aggressive and conciliatory, non-aggressive behavior options that Roger could enact in the future after being disciplined. Participants were asked to select a behavior option for each of the ten situations. For example, participants were asked whether they thought it more likely that, after being disciplined, Roger would chose to "try to talk his friend into giving him some candy," or whether he would "grab a piece of candy from his friend," push another boy to get a better seat on the bus," or "stand his turn in line to get on the bus," etc. SPSBPT scores had a potential range of zero to ten, with one point assigned to each selection of each conciliatory alternative and zero assigned to each forceful alternative chosen in each of the 10 different situations.

The SPSBPT was adapted for this study, following the format of the behavior prediction instrument developed in previous studies (Mancuso & Allen, 1976). Behavior options included on the SPSBPT were chosen from a larger pool of items on the basis of a group of graduate students' judgments of items' representativeness

for distinguishing forceful, physically aggressive and conciliatory, non-aggressive social problem-solving behaviors. A K-R20 coefficient computed on participants' SPSBPT scores yielded an internal consistency index of .93.

The Paternal Rating Scale (PRS). This instrument enabled subjects to make a global evaluation of Roger's disciplining father. The instrument consisted of a response sheet on which there was displayed a horizontal row of seven different men's faces, each labeled to parallel the response sheet used to make the global rating of Roger. Participants were reminded to think about the way Roger's father had treated Roger, and they were then asked to choose the face which corresponded to their judgment of the kind of father they had seen delivering the reprimand to Roger.

Procedure

The 40 boys from each age of the younger age groups and the 37 boys in the oldest age sample were randomly assigned to view one of the four videotaped behavior sequences so that in all, excepting three of the oldest age samples, 10 boys observed and registered their reactions to each scenario. Three of the 14- to 16-year samples included nine boys. Boys participated in the experimental session in groups of three to six, their assignment to the session being dependent on their availability during the scheduled school day. The sessions were conducted by the authors, aided by students who assisted in insuring that participants understood the directions and did not communicate with each other. Sessions lasted approximately 30 minutes.

The procedures were as follows: Participants were first told that they would see a short movie about a boy named Roger and that after watching the

movie they would be asked about what they thought about some of the people in the movie. They were then instructed in the usage of the GPES and PRS, and then quizzed until all subjects could correctly match three successive faces to the appropriate corresponding evaluative label. Participants then viewed the film sequences, after which they were instructed to respond to the GPES and the PRS. Participants again viewed the scenario, and were then introduced to the SPSBPT and instructed in its use. They were guided in choosing the behavior options which they thought pictured the kinds of things Roger would do "from now on...after his father did what he did with him." Responses on this instrument were obtained as on other devices by having participants place marks over the chosen picture alternatives. During the administration of the SPSBPT participants were reminded repeatedly to select the behavior option which they thought would be enacted in the future by the boy in the film. They were cautioned not to choose that behavior he should enact, nor that which they themselves would carry out.

After participants had responded to all three instruments they were thanked for their participation and were escorted back to their classrooms.

Following an interval of about one week, twenty children from each of the three younger age groups were interviewed individually by the first author. Each participant viewed both the explanation and the coercion film sequences and was then asked to give reasons for the father's disciplinary behavior and to explain how the process might work. They also were requested to give examples of the outcomes that they expected to result from the administration of explanatory and coercive reprimand. These interviews, relative to this

study, served only as a source of data for post-hoc, speculative interpretation of subjects' judgment patterns.

Results

The data resulting from the participants' responses were analyzed through the use of SPSS programs (Hull & Nie, 1981; Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner & Bent, 1975). The design of the MANOVA which was applied contained four levels of age-indexed developmental status (5- to 6-year level, 8- to 9-year level, 11- to 12-year level, and 14- to 16-year level), two levels of transgressor's commitment (chronicity) to the use of force in social problem solution (more committed and less committed), and two levels of discipline type (coercion and explanation). The scores from the Global Prospective Evaluation Scale (GPES), the Paternal Rating Scale (PRS), and the Social Problem Solving Behavior Prediction Test (SPSBPT) served as the dependent measures. Hence the design was a 4 x 2 x 2 MANOVA with three dependent variables. Statistical tests served to analyze effects attributable to differences in the locations of centroids defined by the dependent variable cell means. Following the MANOVA, a discriminant analysis was applied to detect the dependent measures most responsible for observed group differences. Results obtained from univariate analyses of variance of selected dependent measures are also reported to elucidate some of the trends observed.

A significant main effect (from the MANOVA) was obtained only for age/developmental level: $F(9,423) = 16.11$, $p < .0001$. Main effects due to the transgressor's commitment and to the discipline type were not statistically

significant, although these independent variables were implicated in interactions (reported below). Results of a discriminant analysis suggest that the multivariate differentiation among participants' responses at the different age levels derive largely from the PRS and the SPSBPT scores. The PRS and the SPSBPT results are characterized by weights of .68 and .63, respectively, on the first discriminant function, which accounts for 62 percent of the variability due to level of age.

Univariate trend analyses showed differences in mean GPES and SPSBPT scores across the levels of age to be described by a quadratic function in the form of an inverted U: $F(1,3) = 23.5$, $p < .001$ for the GPES, and $F(1,3) = 71.4$, $p < .001$ for the SPSBPT. In contrast, both linear and quadratic trends characterized mean PRS scores across levels of age: $F(1,3) = 52.2$, $p < .001$, and $F(1,3) = 31.1$, $p < .001$ for linear and quadratic functions, respectively.

The MANOVA interaction of age/developmental level and discipline type was statistically significant: $F(9,423) = 2.68$, $p < .01$, by Pillai's test. Discriminant analysis implicated all three variables in this multivariate interaction. The GPES and the SPSBPT are characterized by standardized discriminant function coefficients of -.62 and -.60, respectively, on the first discriminant function, which accounts for 63 percent of the variance associated with the age by type interaction. On the second discriminant function, the coefficient for the PRS is .82, while the coefficients for the GPES and SPSBPT are .55 and -.44, respectively.

Figure 1 displays the relations among developmental level, discipline type, and the dependent measures. At the youngest age level those who had

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Insert Figure 1 about here

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observed coercive reprimand judged the transgressor most negatively (GPES) and predicted (on the SPSBPT) that he would consistently engage in aggressive behaviors (also see Table 1). In contrast, the 11- to 12-year-old participants

Insert Table 1 about here

predicted that the boy who had been disciplined by explanation would engage in greater numbers of aggressive behaviors and they judged him to be more negative. The judgments of the 14- to 15-year-old participants did not show any effect, on the GPES and SPSBPT measures, which could be attributed to their observation of type of discipline. Inspection of Table 2 suggests that the oldest sample, on the other hand, viewed the explaining father to be more positive than was the coercive father.

Insert Table 2 about here

Relations among the dependent variable scores comprising the MANOVA were elucidated by calculating nonparametric correlation coefficients. These correlations indicate some of the ways in which perceptions of the transgressor (scores on the GPES and SPSBPT) inter-relate with perceptions of the father as disciplinarian (PRS scores). For the entire sample, collapsed across levels of age, correlations of ratings of the father and ratings of the transgressor were not statistically significant. However, within the sample at the 11- to 12-year developmental level, a Spearman correlation coefficient, denoting the relationship between PRS ratings and GPES ratings, was statistically significant: Rho = .62, $p < .001$. Similarly, the relationship between the PRS

and SPSBPT measures for the 5- to 6-year and the 11- to 12-year samples produced statistically significant Spearman coefficients: Rho = .62, $p < .001$ and Rho = .38, $p < .002$, respectively; but the correlation coefficients were not statistically significant at other age levels.

The MANOVAs of the interactions of chronicity (commitment to transgression) with age or type of discipline were not statistically significant, thereby disconfirming that which was hypothesized. Univariate analysis of variance of the chronicity by age interaction for participants' ratings on the GPES suggested a weak trend: $F(3,141)$ 2.344 $p < .08$. Univariate analysis of variance of the chronicity by type of discipline interaction for the SPSBPT also showed a marginally significant statistical outcome: $F(1,141) = 3.37$, $p < .07$.

Discussion

Relationships of age/discipline type, and ratings of the transgressor.

The 5- to 6-year-old boys in this study, after having observed a transgressor subjected to his father's disciplinary action, rated (on the GPES) the transgressor to be quite negative and predicted (on the SPSBPT) that he would frequently repeat his aggressive behavior. Older primary school children rated the disciplined transgressor quite positively and predicted few repetitions of the unwanted aggressive behaviors. These findings parallel those reported by Mancuso and Allen (1976); in which, moreover, the younger children rated disciplined transgressors more negatively than they had rated the non-disciplined transgressors, whereas older children rated the disciplined transgressors more

positively than they had rated the nondisciplined transgressors. In the present study the youngest sample made far more negative ascriptions to the coercively reprimanded transgressor than they had made to the transgressor who had been exposed to explanatory reprimand. The data of this study do not allow a definitive interpretation of this result, which had appeared as a statistically insignificant trend in the Mancuso and Allen study. (Differences in the types of portrayed transgression could account for the differences in the results of the two studies.) Some post-hoc speculations, based partly on the interviews conducted in conjunction with the current study, are possible. It appears that the 5- to 6-year-old children remained centered on the concrete events depicted in the scenes. Their attributions to the disciplined child were based solely on his involvement in the transgression-discipline sequence. The reports of those young children who had been interviewed indicated that they were unable to use conceptions from which they could ascribe behavior-altering consequences to the father's disciplinary actions. For these boys, paternal discipline only served to signal a father's disapproval and, correlatively, a disciplined boy's "badness." It could be that, operating from such a conceptual base, the children who had viewed coercion, in contrast to the children who had viewed the explanatory discipline procedure, generated more negative expectations for the coercively disciplined transgressor. That is, these youngsters viewed the use of explanation as a sign of the father having placed a less negative judgment on the transgressor.

Both the 8- to 9-year-old boys and the 11- to 12-year-old sample made generally positive ascriptions to the transgressor whom they had seen disciplined,

with the younger sample showing more positive ratings of the boys who had been the target of explanation, whereas the older, 11- to 12-year-old sample making more positive attributions to the coercively disciplined transgressor. Interview responses suggest that the endorsement of coercion made by the 11- to 12-year-old children is based on a belief in force-counterforce causality. According to this way of thinking, the transgressor was seen as impelled to his bad behavior, whereupon the role of an effective father was seen as maintained by appropriate use of counterforce (coercion) to suppress the transgressor's impetus to the transgression and to force him "to learn a lesson." These findings, when contrasted to the ways in which the 15-year-old boys responded in this study, suggest that children at the middle and late childhood level perceive disciplinary action to have an ameliorative effect. In that the adolescents in this study made equally negative attributions to the transgressor in every scene which they had observed, it can be concluded that they believed that a behavior change effect would not appear in any of the contexts which they had observed.

Effects of the transgressor's chronic use of aggressive problem solution. This study had been designed, primarily, to assess the ways in which information about the transgressor's pre-transgression social problem-solving style might affect participants' evaluations of the efficacy of discipline styles at different levels of cognitive development. It was predicted that only the two older-aged samples would "factor in" such information in judging the effectiveness of discipline. The study produced no results which could confirm these expectations. The oldest boys, in fact, appeared to conclude that neither of the reprimands

would have an effect on either "type" of transgressive boy. These results require special attention in light of the parent ratings, which will be discussed herewith.

Ratings of the disciplinarian in relation to other variables. The results of the univariate ANOVA used to assess differences between the samples' means on the ratings of the disciplinary father (PRS scores) show that the youngest children make the most negative ratings of the father, and that the ratings become increasingly higher, until a small downturn appears in the mean ratings assigned by the 14- to 16-year-old participants. The downward dip results from the lower scores (in contrast to the scores assigned by the 11- to 12-year-old sample) which the oldest participants assign to the coercively-reprimanding father.

The results obtained on the PRS support the expectation drawn from Piaget's formulations relative to the ways in which children evaluate a disciplinarian, as discussed in the first section. The findings indicate that the 5- to 6-year-old boys do not employ concepts of responsibility, duty, and intention as they evaluate a disciplining father. Instead, they form their evaluations on a physicalistic basis in terms of the perceived noxiousness, or severity, of the father's disciplining behavior. This conclusion is strengthened by material gathered in interviews with the children. The 5- to 6-year-old participants justified their paternal ratings with concepts such as "mean," "bad," or "nice." Similarly, in the aforementioned study by Appel (1977), 5- to 6-year-old children evaluated permissive mothers highly positively, allowing the conclusion that they used a concrete, present-centered orientation which led them to

cognize the mother as "nice." The samples at the 8- to 9- and the 11- to 12-year level appear to have brought to bear a concept of legitimate authority (Damon, 1977) as they processed the information about the disciplining father. That is, they saw the father doing what fathers should do—exercising authority, power, and control (Lynn, 1974). The oldest boys seem to carry over this orientation, but they also do differentiate the coercive father from the explaining father, having given positive ratings to the coercive disciplinarian, but to a less degree than those given to the explaining father. These inferences will be discussed more thoroughly at a later point.

Contrary to what had been expected, the father ratings were generally orthogonal to the ratings of the transgressor. This appears on the outcomes of the statistics associated with the MANOVA. By observing the emergent discriminant functions one sees that the PRS ratings are weighted quite differently than are the ratings of the transgressor. The nonparametric correlations of the three dependent measures help to clarify these findings. As a general rule, the PRS scores and the ratings of the transgressor did not covary. In effect, then, there is little evidence that the children in this sample associate the father's overall evaluation with the expected behaviors of the transgressor. The oldest children, in fact, tend to see a negative relationship between the father's <u>good-bad</u> value and the evaluative status of the transgressor (Rho between PRS and GPES = $-.25$, $p < .07$). In short, the evaluative status of the disciplinarian does not appear to be related to the expected behaviors of the transgressor.

<u>General interpretation</u>. From the foregoing one can conclude that young children looked at an administered disciplinary action as a "labelling process,"

middle- and late-childhood participants looked at it as having a behavior-changing effect, and older children attributed no such effect to the discipline. For the most part, children associated a context of explanatory reprimand with a more positively-behaving transgressor, with the exception of the 11- to 12-year-old children, who appear to believe that a more coercive reprimand is associated with a more positively-behaving transgressor. (The validity of this interpretation is heightened by observing that it is only at the 11- to 12-year-old level that the PRS ratings correlate with the GPES ratings.) Fifteen-year-old people predict a negatively behaving transgressor in the context of either type of discipline although they clearly saw the explaining father to be more positive than was the coercive father.

That the oldest sample's efficacy judgments about the paternal disciplinary measures were not influenced by their having available information about the chronicity of the transgressor's unwanted behavior requires special discussion. It is worth first noting that in other studies (Page, Note 1) college students, like this study's 14- to 16-year-old participants, clearly differentiate discipline styles in terms of bad-nice, but do not associate discipline style with behavior change outcomes. In fact, college students, like the participants in this study's oldest sample, process information about all discipline styles to conclude that they are equally ineffective in altering transgressive behavior.

We are led to the speculation that adolescents and post-adolescents operate from the belief that there is not one or another particular form of discipline which has one or another particular effect. The implicit personality theory which post-childhood people use to judge a discipline situation probably

incorporates principles which are far more complex than are simple cause and effect conceptions. We again refer to our post-hoc interview data. The 14- to 16-year-olds did verbally evidence consideration of the transgressor's character. They mentioned things such as "He'll never change, no matter what his father does, unless he really can see that he's wrong."; "I guess that if his father has to do something, he might as well explain. At least the boy won't get upset with him."

It appears then, that the cause and effect principles embedded in the scenarios shown in this study adequately relate to the kinds of implicit personality theories that were brought to bear in the assessments made by the 11- to 12-year-old boys who participated in this study. This was not the case for the 14- to 16-year-old boys. These latter persons seem to need other kinds of information in order to make a determination about discipline effectiveness. At this point we believe that they might want, among other things, information about peer group conceptions relative to the transgression. A father's evaluation of a transgression, to an adolescent, might mean little. In fact, adolescents might believe that in some instances it is appropriate to dismiss the evaluation of a parent; and so they might be likely to predict that a change in a transgressor's conception would be unlikely to follow from the father having pronounced a negative value on a behavior.

Clearly, further work is needed to clarify the nature of developing persons' beliefs in this area. Children's responsiveness to parental behaviors is likely to be some function of the kinds of attributions they make concerning parental motives and likely behavioral outcomes. Thus, a more thorough knowledge

of children's beliefs and mediating cognitive attributions could, besides enriching our theoretical knowledge of the parent-child relationship, be of enormous practical value to parents in their efforts at influencing their children.

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Table 1

Mean GPES Ratings and SPSBPT Scores by Age and Condition

	GPES					SPSBPT				
Film Condition	Verbally Argumentative Coercion	Verbally Argumentative Explanatory	Physically Aggressive Coercion	Physically Aggressive Explanatory	Row Marginal	Verbally Argumentative Coercion	Verbally Argumentative Explanatory	Physically Aggressive Coercion	Physically Aggressive Explanatory	Row Marginal
Age										
5- 7	2.20	4.20	3.10	4.40	3.48	2.90	6.80	3.00	5.40	4.53
8- 9	5.40	5.40	4.70	3.70	4.80	7.40	9.50	7.50	8.30	8.18
11-12	4.10	3.90	4.60	3.90	4.13	7.60	7.90	8.70	5.70	7.48
14-16	3.20	3.00	2.56	2.78	2.89	2.50	3.33	2.33	2.00	2.54
Column Marginals	3.72	4.12	3.74	3.70	3.82	5.10	6.88	5.38	5.35	5.68

NOTE: Physically aggressive vs. verbally argumentative denotes the two variations in the transgressor's pre-transgression social problem-solving style. Coercion vs. explanation denotes the two variations in the father's mode of discipline.

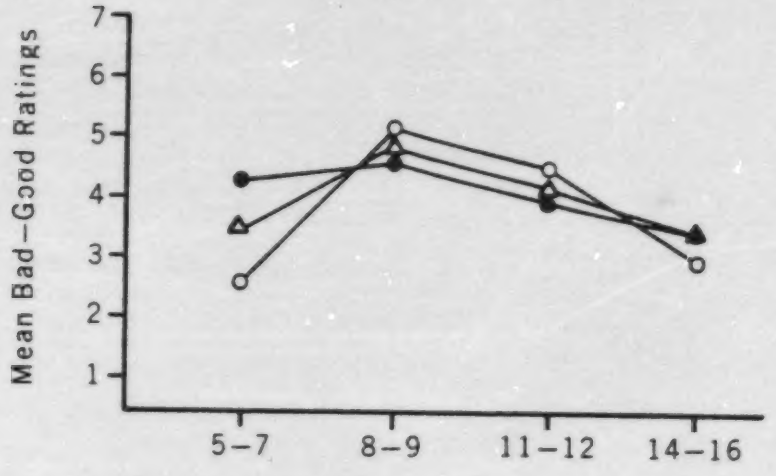
Table 2

Mean Paternal Ratings by Age and Film Condition

Film Condition	Verbally Argumentative Coercive	Verbally Argumentative Explanatory	Physically Aggressive Coercive	Physically Aggressive Explanatory	Row Marginal
Age					
5- 7	1.80	2.20	3.00	2.90	2.48
8- 9	4.40	4.70	4.60	5.30	4.75
11-12	5.20	5.10	5.70	4.80	5.20
14-16	4.10	5.56	4.67	5.22	4.89
Column Marginal	3.88	4.39	4.49	4.56	4.33

Figure Caption

Figure 1. Mean GPES ratings and SPSBPT scores by age level for each discipline mode and averaged across discipline modes.


Mean Bad–Good Ratings
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
5–7
8–9
11–12
14–16

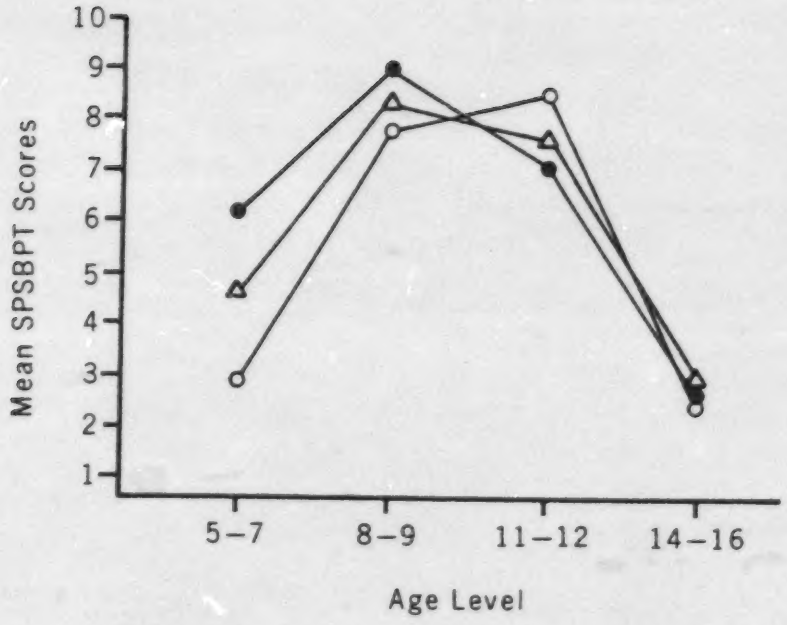

Mean SPSBPT Scores
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
5–7
8–9
11–12
14–16
Age Level

Fig.1